

SLOW FOOD BIBLE STUDIES

MALACHI (27 studies)

This book, placed last in the Old Testament, is by an unknown author, who with Haggai and Zechariah is classed as one of the post-exilic prophets. He is thought to have guided spiritual affairs in Jerusalem in about 434 BC while Nehemiah was absent in Persia in the twelfth year of his governorship. Many of the abuses against which Malachi contends, such as a corrupt priesthood and financial mismanagement, are also the themes of Nehemiah's reforms. The exiles had indeed returned; the temple had been rebuilt; life in the city of Jerusalem had more or less returned to normal – but laxity, leniency and lethargy had begun to develop in the context of comfort and security under Persian rule.

- Chapters 1-4** How many marks out of ten would you give Malachi as a teacher?
- 1:1** How does each of the characters in this drama relate to the Word? Am I in here somewhere? *2 Cor 3:14-18; I Pet 1:23-25.*
- 1:2-3** Is God's love selective? *Rom 9:10-13; I John 4:9-10, 16-19.*
- 1:4-5** Is the greatness of Christ on the same level as the greatness of God? *I Cor 15:24-28; Phil 2:10-11.*
- 1:6-8** If I am making second-rate offerings to the Lord, is there much I can do about it? *Isa 57:15-19; Rom 12:1-2.*
- 1:9-11** What is true worship? *Heb 10:1-25; John 4:23-24.* v9 is ironical; v11 is prophetic.
- 1:12-14a** If I find church or chapel boring, would God sympathise? *Mk 12:33; I Cor 11:27-32.*
- 1:14b with 1:5,11** Am I the centre of the universe? *Eph 4:6,10; Col 1:15-20; cf Pss 8,139.*
- 2:1-3** If what goes on in God's temple is unacceptable, so what? *I Cor 6:19-20; Jas 4:5-7; I Pet 2:5.*
- 2:4-6** Is any one of these characteristics of 'Levi' (or, for that matter, a Christian teacher) more important than the rest? *Num 25:11-13; 2 Tim 2:15; I Pet 4:10-11.*
- 2:7-9** 'It is those in positions of leadership who are in the greatest danger of misleading others' (Baldwin) – true only of Heads? *Mt 18:5-6; Jas 3:1-2.*
- 2:10-12** Why shouldn't I do what I want, e.g. in my relationships? *Gal 5:16-18; I Tim 5:2b; 2 Tim 2:19.*
- 2:13-16** *Either*, If I take marriage vows, could I justify ever breaking them, or causing another to break them? *Or*, If I instinctively rebel against this teaching, why is that? *Gen 39:9; Ps 51 title and v4; Prov ch.5, esp. 18; Luke 16:18.*
- 2:17** Is God fed up with me? *Isa 63:7-10; Eph 4:30; Rev 3:16.*
- 3:1-2a** Is the Lord's coming welcome? *2 Tim 4:8; Tit 2:13; Mt ch 25.* 'Whom you seek...delight' is probably ironical, in the context of 2:17c.
- 3:2b-4** If I am finding the Lord's discipline painful, is there any purpose in it? *Job 23:12; Mt 5:20,48; Heb 12:3-11; Rev 3:9.*

- 3:5** Is my conscience clear on all these points? *Ps 139:23,24; I Pet 1:17; Heb 10:22.*
- 3:6-7** 'In *Malachi* God wrestles with the pride of the human heart.' Discuss with reference to these verses. *Hos 6:1-4; 14:1-3; Acts 2:37-39.*
- 3:8-10a** Why does the suggestion of giving away some of my money to the Lord's work tend to find me reluctant? Should it? *Dt 8:17-18; 2 Cor 8:5,9; 9:6-11.*
- 3:10b-12** Are these promised blessings material or spiritual, or both?
Prov 11:24-25; Lk 6:38; 12:13.
- 3:13-15** Is the Lord's service always easy and delightful?
Ps 73:13-1; Lk 15:29-31; Mt 11:28-30; Heb 10:36.
- 3:16** If I mean business with God, do I need to be meeting with other Christians?
Heb 10:24-25; Acts 2:37-38, 42, 46; 16:13; 17:11.
- 3:17-18** What is my motivation for service? *Exod 19:4-6; I Pet 2:9-10.*
- 4:1-3** Is life all sunshine and leaping with joy? *Hab 3:17-19; Phil 4:4; Jude 21.*
- 4:4** Do I need to worry about the Ten Commandments if I'm a Christian?
Mt 5:17-20; 7:12; Rom 2:13; Gal 3:11,24.
- 4:5-6** What light do these verses shed upon my role as a teacher?
Lk 1:16-17; Rev 22:20-21.
- Review** What glimpses of Christ do we catch in the book of *Malachi*?